USO funds for rural telecom infrastructure

2109. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Centre proposes to fund telecom companies to create telecom infrastructure in rural India from the Universal Service Obligation fund;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of creation of rural telecom infrastructure in Orissa under the above project and how far this will help improve rural connectivity in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) A proposal is under active consideration of the Government to provide support for shareable infrastructure to the eligible access service providers and infrastructure service providers for providing cellular mobile services in rural and remote areas of the country including such areas in Orissa. Consultations have been held with the Access Service Providers, Infrastructure Providers, Association of Telecom Service Providers and Manufacturers in this regard. To enable such support, a bill to amend the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 is proposed to be introduced during the Budget Session, 2006.

Dues of private telecom companies

2110. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether private telecom companies owe huge amount to Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof, and

(c) how and when Government propose to recover the dues from those operators?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS